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ARTICLES:

(1) Ozawa's fund-managing group, Rikuzan-kai, tainted with allegations

SANKEI (Page 23) (Full)
March 5, 2009

The special investigation squad of the Tokyo district Public

Prosecutors Office arrested a person who was in charge of accounting for Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa's political fund-management association, Rikuzan-kai. The body is found to have received donations, estimated at a total of nearly 200 million yen, from Nishimatsu Construction Co., a second-tier general contractor, through its dummy political groups. The murkiness of activities by Rikuzan-kai was also pointed out many times in the past. This is not the first time for the association to be suspected of receiving donations from a suspicious company. Prosecutors will look into the data seized from its office and also investigate its past allegations.

Construction interests

Ozawa was called the late Kakuei Tanaka's favorite disciple. Even after leaving the Liberal Democratic Party, he has maintained his influence as a lawmaker representing the interests of the construction industry. According to investigators, Rikuzan-kai reportedly was known as the window for donations from Nishimatsu, as well as other shady general contractors.

In connection with a tax-evasion case involving Mizutani Kensetsu, a second-tier general contractor based in Mie Prefecture, which developed into former Fukushima governor's bribery case, it was revealed that Rikuzan-kai had received a total 240,000 yen from two executives of Mizutani in 2004 and 2005. Mizutani was also founded to have contributed a total of 3.5 million yen to the DPJ's Iwate Prefecture 4th constituency general office in 2003 and 2004. Further, it was unveiled that Tekken Kensetsu Corp. in Tokyo, whose officials were under summary indictment over bid-rigging for

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projects ordered by the Defense Facilities Administration Agency, had donated 250,000 yen to Rikuzan-kai in 2004.

Following a bribery case involving general contractors exposed from 1993 through 1994, Kajima Corp. was found to have made contributions to Ozawa, who chaired Shinseito at that time. Rikuzan-kai was regarded as one of the receptacles for political donations, and other political parties called for summoning Ozawa to testify as a sworn witness before a Diet session.

Defense interests, as well

Besides close ties with Nishimatsu Construction Co., Ozawa also took over defense interests from the late former LDP Vice President Shin Kanemaru when he retired from the political world. The defense interests he inherited include the Japan Strategic Research Center, a think tank that was regarded as a base for vested interests.

Further more, Rikuzan-kai was revealed to have received 500,000 yen to 2.5 million yen in shady donations every year between 1995 and 1999 from defense trading firm Yamada Corp., whose former employees were arrested on bribery charges involving former Vice Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya in 2007.

Prosecutors yesterday searched Ozawa's office in Oshu City, Iwate Prefecture. The 4th constituency general office, which is housed in it, received donations amounting to 3.5 million yen between 2000 and 2006. A person connected with political circles said: "This proves that Mr. Ozawa continued to be influential as a lawmaker lobbying for the interests of the defense industry even after he became an opposition party member."

Real estate business

It came to light in 2007 through its political funding report that Rikuzan-kai had acquired 13 real estate properties for approximately 1.02 billion yen in Tokyo. This case focused much attention on Rikuzan-kai. It was also unveiled that the association had earned a total of 9.8 million yen in rental income by the end of 2006 by renting two condominiums that purchased with political funds. The Political Funds Control Law bans using political funds for other purposes than three purposes, including deposit. Rikuzan-kai explained at that time: "The purpose of the renting is not asset management," but the group had to announce plans to push up the

selling of such properties. In the wake of this case, the said law was revised in June 2007 to ban fund-management groups from purchasing real estate.

Rikuzan-kai, which has slipped through the meshes of regulations, is indisputably a political organization that always has been at the center of Ozawa's money-driven politics.

(2) Systematized illegal donations: Tokyo Public Prosecutors Office establishes criminal case with statute of limitation into consideration

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
March 5, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa's secretary was arrested on suspicion of violating the Political Fund Control Law involving the party's political fund management body

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Rikuzan-kai. Ozawa during a press conference on March 4 criticized public prosecutors, saying, "The investigation is strikingly unfair." Public prosecutors have launched compulsory investigation amid a murky political situation. What is the intent of the investigation, which Ozawa described as unusual?

Shrewd system

Tatsuya Sakuma, chief of the Tokyo Public Prosecutors Office investigation squad on the 3rd announced the arrests of persons involved in the case, including Takanori Okubo, treasurer of Rikuzan-kai and Ozawa's first state-funded secretary. Explaining the reason for the launching of the raids, Sakuma said, "Assessing the shrewd trick of using fictitious organizations, the nature of the donations and the motives from an overall viewpoint, we have reached the decision that the case cannot be overlooked."

The amount of falsely listed donations comes to 21 million yen. In major cases similar to the present case, such an amount topped 100 million yen. The amount involved in the case this time is rather small.

The donations in question were made under the guise of two political organizations headed by former Nishimatsu Construction officials. Employees and their families became members of those organizations and paid membership fees. However, regarding income from membership fees, the Political Funds Control Law only requires the statement of total amounts, making it impossible to trace the donation resources. The method used by the company goes against the purport of the law, which is designed to improve the transparency of political funds. One senior public prosecutor underscored, "This is a highly unscrupulous case in terms of systemized illegal corporate donations having been made for a long period of time."

Ozawa during a press conference on the 4th said, "The DPJ's fund management organization has accepted those donations with the understanding that they were provided by political organizations. However, it was found that Rikuzan-kai provided receipts when receiving the donations, raising the suspicion that the DPJ had recognized that the donations from the political organizations were effectively from Nishimatsu Construction.

Ozawa will likely be asked to give more accounts.

Why at this timing?

Ozawa was also furious over the timing of the launching of the investigations: "The investigation has been conducted at a time when the next House of Representatives election is a hot topic. That's an unfair exercise of state power both politically and legally." To Ozawa, who aims for a change of administration, the launching of the investigation at this time appears to be intended to obstruct campaign.

However, public prosecutors made an issue of the statue of limitations. The statute of limitations on the offense of recording

falsehoods is five years under the Political Funds Control Law. Of the donations worth 21 million yen, over which arrests were made, the statute of limitations on offense of receiving 7 million yen in 2003 will run out at the end of this month. The investigation squad noted that postponing the investigation was not an option. Another senior public prosecutor stressed: "We have found illegal activities

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on such a major scale. We cannot afford to overlook the case."

There is also a public prosecutor who took the view that the investigation squad wanted to avoid making an impact on issues that affect people's lives. The fiscal 2009 budget bill was enacted at a Lower House plenary session on February 27, suggesting that public prosecutors had been waiting for the best moment for the launching of the investigation into the case until then.

(3) Anatomy of the DPJ: Retaining Ozawa in his post a foregone conclusion

SANKEI (Pages 1 and 2) (Abridged slightly)
March 5, 2009

In the wake of the arrest of his first state-paid secretary on suspicion of receiving donations from Nishimatsu Construction Co., a second-tier general contractor, in violation of the Political Funds Control Law, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa held a press conference at party headquarters yesterday. In it, Ozawa announced his intent to continue to serve as DPJ president, saying: "The donations have been dealt with appropriately," and, "There is no reason to offer an apology."

About the issue of whether he should resign, Ozawa said: "I have nothing to be blamed for, and I am not thinking of taking any action because of it." He also harshly criticized the investigation by the special investigation squad of the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office, saying: "The unprecedented investigation, now underway at a time when the next House of Representatives election is being talked about, is an unfair exercise of state power, politically and legally."

An emergency executive meeting was held at DPJ headquarters yesterday morning. In it, Ozawa explained about the fact that his first state-paid secretary had been arrested by the special investigation unit of the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office. Bowing deeply, he also said, "I am terribly sorry for causing trouble at a time like this." Everyone looked grim, with the exception of House of Councillors Diet Affairs Chairman Susumu Yanase who applauded.

"I felt uncomfortable as I saw him applause in such circumstances," a senior DPJ lawmaker said later on.

The scandal that hit the party's "election face" has caused tumult in the DPJ, which was preparing to take over the reins of government through the next Lower House election. Deputy President Naoto Kan also looked stern in the meeting.

After the executive meeting, Ozawa held a press conference. There, he did not offer an apology either to the public or other DPJ lawmakers over the scandal involving his secretary. That was not all. He did not show up at a Lower House members' meeting that took place in the Diet building immediately before a Lower House plenary session yesterday afternoon.

This drew a disapproving reaction from within the party, with a former cabinet minister saying, "I think he is angry with the approach of investigative authorities, but still, he should have offered an apology to his colleagues and supporters who are really worried about him."

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"I will fight"

Completely indifferent to the commotion in the party, Ozawa remains bullish even after the scandal broke out.

Prosecutors searched Ozawa's Tokyo office on the night of March 3. Lower House member Tomohiro Ishikawa, who served as Ozawa's secretary in the past, called on Ozawa at his office later that night. Seeing Ishikawa, Ozawa said: "I will fight. I have done things fairly. Please give my best regards to everyone." Prior to the investigation, Ozawa played a game of go with the party's supreme advisor, Kozo Watanabe, for about two hours at a hotel near the Diet building.

The game took place after the media had reported that prosecutors would search the Ozawa office. After the game, Watanabe said to his aide: "If I had been in Mr. Ozawa's shoes, I would have been insecure."

Later in the day, the People's New Party deputy head Shizuka Kamei placed a call to Ozawa and complained that the investigation was a plot by the government. In response, Ozawa said: "I think so, too. I'm not thinking of quitting. This is an unfair display of state and prosecution power. The allegations against my secretary will be cleared away. He will not be indicted."

Efforts to calm the storm

Ozawa remained firm in the press conference. Where does that confidence come from?

In addition to his rage over the prosecutors' "unjust" investigation, Ozawa takes pride that he has demonstrated strong leadership in bringing the helm of government within the reach of the DPJ. Ozawa, who has declared that he would stake his political life on the next Lower House election, cannot afford to throw away his last big job of paving the way for toppling the Aso administration and disbanding the LDP.

Keeping in mind that the Upper House begins discussing the fiscal 2009 budget on March 5, Vice President Hajime Ishii, too, declared a total showdown. Deciding as early as March 3 that Ozawa would stay on, Ozawa aides and the party leadership contained moves to unseat Ozawa. A group of junior and mid-level members, including Vice President Seiji Maehara and former Policy Research Council Chairman Yukio Edano, who are keeping themselves at arm's length with Ozawa, had planned to meet at a Tokyo hotel on the night of March 3. They called off the event on short notice.

Naoto Kan, who does not conceal his eagerness to become Ozawa's successor, ordered a group of DPJ lawmakers led by himself not to make unnecessary moves.

Vice President Katsuya Okada, a major candidate for the DPJ presidency, was asked by several junior and mid-ranking members to forgo his plan to visit Southeast Asia on March 8-13, but he did not give his nod in approval. Okada is apparently trying to keep his distance from the race in the party for the post-Ozawa era.

Junior members, who had bluffed on the night of March 3 that the Ozawa era was over and that they would fight the next election under

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Okada, kept silent on March 4.

"We don't want to be referred to as ones who ousted President Ozawa. A person close to Mr. Ozawa should put a bell on him," a mid-level member said anemically.

The prevailing view in the pro-Ozawa group is that there is no one but Ozawa who can spearhead the drive to achieve a change of government. Ozawa, who led the DPJ to an overwhelming victory in the 2007 Upper House election, has laid the foundation for a change in administration with his unique election strategy. Through his nationwide political tours, Ozawa has encouraged prospective DPJ candidates to forge human relations via unassuming daily activities.

Ozawa, who boasts outstanding fundraising power in the political community, has presented a number of problems associated with the handling of his political funds in the past.

For instance, an office-expense scandal came to light in which Rikuzankai under the supervision of the arrested Ozawa secretary purchased pieces of land and condominiums in central Tokyo worth 1 billion yen with political funds, including political party subsidies, and registered them all in the name of Ozawa.

A senior DPJ member took this view: "When he defended former LDP Vice President Shin Kanemaru, Mr. Ozawa dealt with the matter in a similar manner. The press conference he held was the wrong step; it has simply ignited the investigation unit."

A suspended sentence

Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama attended a DPJ lawmakers' meeting last night in which he underline the importance of party unity for the sake of taking power. But in reality, most members, including the party leadership, are set to watch quietly how the investigation unfolds.

"The prosecutors are serious. There will be another critical event," a mid-level member said apparently in anticipation of Ozawa's resignation. The party's endorsement to keep Ozawa as its leader is a suspended sentence, so to speak.

A veteran DPJ lawmaker noted discouragingly: "I really don't want to see Mr. Ozawa, the destroyer, end up destroying our party. But for now, we just have to trust his explanation."

(4) Futenma airfield should be relocated elsewhere outside Okinawa
Prefecture: Maehara

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)
March 5, 2009

Seiji Maehara, vice president of the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), has been elected in the current Diet session to preside over the House of Representatives Special Committee on Okinawa and Northern Issues. The Ryukyu Shimpo interviewed him to hear his views regarding Okinawa's base issues and development.

-- The DPJ is upholding its policy of relocating Futenma airfield elsewhere outside Okinawa Prefecture or Japan. Will the DPJ

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incorporate this policy in its manifesto?

Maehara: It has already become a policy of the DPJ. I think it will be a part of the manifesto. However, there is a counterpart to deal with in diplomatic negotiations, so we will have to negotiate with the United States. I've been taking part in the Futenma issue since SACO (Japan-U.S. Special Action Committee on Okinawa), and I think I'm one of those concerned. Even now, I still have a strong feeling about Futenma.

-- There has been no progress in the relocation of Futenma airfield. What do you think is the major reason?

Maehara: From the start, it was impossible to plan on relocating Futenma airfield to Camp Schwab. It's wrong to reclaim that beautiful sea. The sea is deep, so it will take time and money. Besides, we're also concerned about the environment.

-- Where do you think Futenma airfield should be relocated?

Maehara: We've got to do this issue when we take the reins of government, so I can't say now.

-- Somewhere outside Okinawa Prefecture or Japan?

Maehara: That's it.

-- Is it realistic to relocate Futenma airfield somewhere outside Okinawa Prefecture?

Maehara: We're committed (in the DPJ's Okinawa vision), so we will take a hard and fast stance in negotiating with the United States. Our basic stance is to close down the dangerous Futenma airfield as early as possible. The package (of plans to relocate Futenma airfield and move U.S. Marines in Okinawa to Guam) is a factor in place, so the question is how to work out good ideas.

-- What about the Guam pact?

Maehara: We're against it. Although most of those committing crimes are line troops, they're just going to relocate the headquarters. It would be better to move the line troops rather than to move the headquarters. This way of thinking is close to stationing troops during emergencies.

-- But the DPJ has yet to decide on its policy

Maehara: Maybe they're considering relations with the United States. We're against the pact, but we are not anti-U.S. We could review the pact.

-- After U.S. military bases in Okinawa are gone, would you like to increase the Self-Defense Forces' presence instead?

Maehara: There are too many bases in Okinawa. In the future, the south will be important. However, we're not thinking of increasing Okinawa's burden.

-- What do you think about development in Okinawa?

Maehara: We'd like to plan a landfill from Naha Airport to build one more runway. Okinawa should create an environment for more tourists

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from abroad. We will also take steady backup measures so Okinawa can stand on its own in the agricultural area as well. In terms of land size alone, Japan ranks 60th in the world. But when including its exclusive economic zone, Japan ranks sixth. This depends largely on Okinawa, which is a prefecture of islands. From this perspective, we should allocate the budget.

(5) F-22 pullout set for mid-April

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)
March 5, 2009

The U.S. Air Force's 18th Wing Operations Group Commander Col. Ronald Banks clarified yesterday that the F-22 fighter jets, temporarily deployed to the U.S. Kadena Air Base, would withdraw in mid-April. The commander explained this to Kadena Town's Mayor Tokujitsu Miyagi when the mayor visited Kadena Air Base yesterday to lodge a protest with the base against the intensification of noise around the base and to reduce noise and remove aircraft from outside.

According to Miyagi, Banks said: "The F-22 fighter jets will withdraw from Kadena Air Base in the middle of next month (April). Kadena Air Base is strategically important, so if we are ordered, we will receive all types of aircraft as our task. We cannot control the types of aircraft to be deployed." Miyagi quoted the commander as explaining: "In the next two to six weeks, there will be some change in their deployment to Kadena Air Base. The F-15 fighter planes will also go to Thailand for training."

Banks said nothing about whether the F-22s will take off in the early morning when returning to their base in the United States, according to Miyagi.

The F-22s have been temporarily deployed to Kadena Air Base since their arrival on Jan. 10. The U.S. Air Force said the F-22s were on a training mission to the base for about three months.

According to Kadena Town's statistics, aircraft noise exceeding 70 decibels was read out 1,918 times in the town's Yara district over a period of 11 days from Feb. 16 through Feb. 26 and 174 times a day on average.

(6) Kasumigaseki's reckless actions during a time of political turmoil; Controversial Foreign Ministry officials with history have regained power

SHUKAN BUNSHUN (Pp. 42 - 44) (Full)
March 5, 2009

By Kazuo Yamaguchi, journalist

With his cabinet's support rates sharply plunging, Prime Minister Taro Aso has been trying to use diplomacy in three areas -- a summit meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama, the issue of ownership of the Russia-held four northern islands off Hokkaido, and the cases of abductions of Japanese nationals by North Korea -- to boost his administration's popularity. There is even information that secret negotiations with North Korea on the abduction issue are being carried out.

However, there is concern that Aso in his rush to gain popularity

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might make major diplomatic concessions that would damage national interests. The reason is because a number of Foreign Ministry officials who had once been reprimanded and came under heavy media attack for their misconduct, have regained influence one after the other.

The cabinet met on Feb. 23 to approve the appointment of Deputy Minister Masaharu Kono as ambassador to Russia. Kono is one of the officials with a tainted past. Reporters accompanying the Emperor's visit to the United States in 1994 and the Imperial Household Agency all snubbed him for using his personal video camera to film the Emperor and the Empress, completely ignoring his official job.

Shukan Bunshun, a weekly magazine, carried an article about the 'video incident' in its issue dated July 7, 1994. Imperial Household Agency officials still bitterly talk about the incident, with one official saying:

"The Imperial couple appeared exhausted from the record fierce heat. The Emperor in particular was not in good physical condition due to the time difference. Kono, who should have been giving consideration to the Emperor's condition since he was an accompanying official, fascinated himself all day with making a video."

On this matter, Kono was given a strong warning. If such was done in the prewar period, the official would have been replaced for an insulting and disrespectful act. Despite the incident, Kono has climbed the career ladder, serving in such posts as director general of the Foreign Policy Bureau and deputy minister. He now has landed an ambassadorial portfolio.

Yasuo Saito, Kono's predecessor, is now serving as ambassador to France, his most precious assignment. However, his reputation in Moscow was not good. A correspondent in Moscow said:

"Ambassador Saito cannot speak Russian. Since he often enjoyed golf, tennis, and karaoke, he was called the ambassador for golf, tennis and karaoke. Reporters criticized him for suggesting holding a karaoke singing contest to Japanese reporters soon after a Japanese fisherman had been shot to death by a Russian border patrol. The incident occurred immediately after he has assumed his ambassadorial post."

Kazuyoshi Umemoto, who had made a cataclysmic gaffe during Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to North Korea in 2002, was picked last December as director general of the North American Affairs Bureau, a key post. He was previously a minister at the Japanese Embassy in London.

(In 2002) the Koizumi-led delegation to North Korea sent Umemoto,

who had served as director of the Northeast Asia Division, to Pyongyang as head of its preparatory team. On Sept. 17, Umemoto met Mr. and Mrs. Hasuike, Mr. and Mrs. Chimura and Kim Hye Gyong, the daughter of Megumi Yokota, who the North Koreans say is dead.

Umemoto was criticized for meeting them without bringing any camera and tape recorder. After returning home, he failed to clearly explain his meeting in Pyongyang to abductee families. Two days later, he hurriedly returned to London, his duty station. I wonder if such a person can carry out diplomatic activities in the United States, taking the lead in talks with the administration of President Barack Obama.

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A reporter attached to the Foreign Ministry said: "It has been the practice for the Foreign Ministry to promote its officials involved in scandals after waiting until things simmer down." A typical example is that Haruhisa Takeuchi was promoted to ambassador to Israel last October from director general of the Intelligence and Analysis Service.

Takeuchi, when he was director of the Management and Coordination Division, was reprimanded with a pay cut in connection with a scandal in the ministry. The scandal involved the embezzlement of secret diplomatic funds by Katsutoshi Matsuo, who headed the now defunct Overseas Visit Support Division.

Matsuo was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison after being found guilty of embezzling from so-called discretionally diplomatic funds. He reportedly was released from the Maebashi Prison late last year before completing his prison term. "Although there is a rumor that he went to the Philippines after being released from the prison, his whereabouts has not been confirmed," a Foreign Ministry source said.

Another reporter attached to the Foreign Ministry said:

"Out of a total of 1 billion yen in secret slush funds, prosecutors discovered 500 million yen had been used, but they never found out how over 400 million yen had been spent. Matsuo alone accepted the guilt and was tried and sent to prison."

Based on its own investigation, the Foreign Ministry reprimanded 16 senior officials, including then Foreign Minister Yohei Kono, for having betrayed public confidence. However, since then, the 16 have been promoted, as if nothing had happened.

Successive Management and Coordination Division directors' supervisory responsibility was called into question. Those division directors include: Mitoji Yabunaka, who was reprimanded with a three-month pay cut, has risen to the top post of administrative vice minister; Hideaki Domichi was promoted to ambassador to India; and Kojiro Shiojiri was named ambassador to Indonesia. Takeuchi was the last person among the successive directors to be promoted.

Regarding the secret funds scandal as organized embezzlement, prosecutors interrogated then Deputy Vice Minister Tomoyuki Abe, then Management and Coordination Division Director Takeuchi and then Financial Affairs Division Director Masato Kitera. However, they all skipped the planned Diet testimony, since they were suddenly admitted to hospital. The incident was called 'suspicious hospitalization.'

The reporter attached to the Foreign Ministry said:

"Of the three, as Kitera alone seemed to have become neurotic, and he continued to stay away from office, taking a leave of absence for a long time. There was even a rumor that he would be incapacitated. Last year, however, he became director general of the International Cooperation Bureau. Ministry officials were surprised."

Incidentally, Abe has been reprimanded three times for such irregularities as padding expenses for limousine bills of the secretariat for the 2000 Kyushu-Okinawa summit. Nevertheless, Abe has served in such posts as ambassador to Turkey. The past misdeed

of Shinsuke Sugiyama was exposed, when he was named director general for global issues, an ambassador-level post, in the final days of the Fukuda administration.

Shukan Post, a weekly magazine reported in 1997 on a slush fund embezzlement scandal involving Foreign Ministry personnel. The weekly alleged that a senior ministry official had pocketed 200 million yen from secret diplomatic funds for two years from 1993 and that the money had been used for entertainment expenses and for dealing with the media.

At that time, the weekly carried the article without naming the official. However, Lower House member Muneo Suzuki revealed in a book titled Executor of Shadowy Power (published in 2005 by Kodansha) that Sugiyama, secretary of then Administrative Vice Minister Kunihiro Saito, was the person in question. The reporter attached to the Foreign Ministry said: "If all the bad officials were removed when the Sugiyama embezzlement scandal was discovered, the Matsuo scandal would have been prevented."

However, since prosecutors did not take any action in 1997, Sugiyama continued to advance in his career.

Kyoji Komachi was promoted to ambassador to Thailand in the last days of the Fukuda administration, even though he had been admonished in 2003 for misuse of taxi vouchers.

I recall former Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi's remarks that the Foreign Ministry's personnel appointments defy conventional wisdom.

(7) Prime Minister's schedule, March 4

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
March 5, 2009

09:37

Met at the Kantei with Cabinet Councillor Toyota and Ambassador to ASEAN Katori, attended by Vice Foreign Minister Yabunaka, Vice METI Minister Mochizuki, Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director General Saiki, and METI Trade Policy Bureau Director General Okada.

10:32

Attended an Upper House Budget Committee meeting. Later, met Upper House Budget Committee's first director Iwanaga.

10:52

Met Japan International Cooperation Agency President Sadako Ogata, with Sasae present.

11:29

Met "Peach Girls" in Koga City, Ibaraki Prefecture, Mayor Shirato, and others, with Lower House member Keiko Nagaoka present. Later, met Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Uruma.

13:02

Attended a Lower House plenary session.

14:15

Arrived at his private office in Nagata-cho.

14:36

Met New Komeito Vice President Higashi at the Kantei.

15:16

Met Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura. Followed by Foreign Ministry's Director General for Global Issues Sugiyama, METI Industrial Technology and Environment Bureau Director General Suzuki, and Environment Ministry's Global Environment Bureau Director General

Terada.

16:04

Met Ocean Policy Headquarters Executive Secretary Oba. Followed by Waseda University President Katsuhiko Shirai and Ritsumeikan University President Toyomi Nagata.

17:33

Met Pacific Islands Forum Chairman Talagi.

18:56

Dined with Election Strategy Vice Chairman Suga at a Japanese restaurant at the Hotel New Otani.

20:40

Went to a pub in the Hotel New Otani with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Konoike.

22:16

Returned to his official residence.

ZUMWALT